[42 cont.]
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622
372
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[262]
784
the mother's kin group. One of the tasks of the village chief is the guarding of the socha fire. Socha means pure or sacred or taboo. Foods that are prohibited for certain age groups or for one sex are "socha" for these persons. The word "socha" seems to me to be a very ancient one, or else it is a loan word from another language. Every place has at least two fires: the ordinary one, which is
166
373
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available to everyone, and the socha fire for men only. When the village moves to another place, the family head takes the socha fire along. During the march veldkost is gathered. Once they have arrived at the new place, the family head starts a new socha fire under a tall tree and roasts the veldkost. The boys leave immediately and go hunting, while the women and girls set up the windscreen. Whatever the old man has roasted at the socha fire he is supposed to eat by himself; ordinarily this is what he does. Finally a messenger arrives and announces that a head of large game has been killed. Hours pass; the old man simply remains seated there, while the women and children make themselves comfortable in the new windscreen. [Fig. 15 appears here.] The game is brought to the socha fire, and the meat from the legs and
[262]
shoulder blade is cut off and given to the women and children, who are never allowed to eat meat from the bone. All the rest is
[622]
consumed by the men at the socha fire. The village chief also has the task of organizing the celebration for the first veld fruits. The hordes that I visited no longer practice this custom. Vedder has described it for the !Kung of Gaub.

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622
When Lieutenant Fischer rode from Namutoni to the Okovanggo in 1908, the Bushmen everywhere still had a tight organization and a common leader. When Captain François went beyond Grootfontein for the first time, he was given considerable support by the chief of the !Kung Bushmen. It is worthy of note that the famed copper mines of Tsumeb, on which the welfare of Southwest Africa depends to a great extent, were discovered by a Bushman chief (2). Since then the eastern !Kung have not had a

2. He himself was a half-breed.

chief. The northern !Kung supposedly still have one. The oldest chief I heard of was "χ'amme," the lion. He was a great huntsman.

hind quarters, the entrails and the trotters (*ǂei-ti*). Her portion is known as the *ǂnoe-di* and is the only meat which may be partaken of by women. The *ǂnoe-di* is shared by her with the other women, including the *ǂkham-khoidi* (adolescent girls) and with the young children. The *ǂnoe-di*, however, may not be eaten until the *gei-khoib* has tasted the meat. It is cut on the spot where the carcass was found by the person who shot the animal and handed over to the latter's wife after arrival at the *||gāus*. It is not brought under the *!heis*. It is cooked by the wife of the hunter on the fire in front of her hut after which the other women come and get their portions and eat it in their own huts. The *ǂkham-khoidi* obtain their meat from their respective mothers, as also do young children still living with their parents. If women partake of any other meat than the *ǂnoe-di*, the poison of the arrow will not act when an animal has been shot. The meat which may be eaten by the *axarogu* (youths) is known as *!om-||gani* and includes the flesh of the abdominal wall, kidneys, etc., and the genital organs such as udder, testicles, etc. It is prepared by the *axarogu* themselves over their own fire at the *axarogudi ǂgaos* (young men's hut). The person who shot the animal receives the ribs and shoulder blade of one side. He may prepare his portion either under the *!heis* or over his own fire. The ribs must be cooked and the shoulder blade roasted because they taste better when done in this manner. The rest of the meat is *soxa* to him and if he eats any other part, *e.g.*, the *ǂkoms* he will not meet with success in hunting because the poison will weaken and refuse to act. The parts of the animal which go to the *gei-khoib* are known as the *so-eis* and include portions about two finger breadths in size from each quarter, from each side of the back and one rib from each side. These are strung on a thong or cord and hung up for his sole use. *So-eis* may, however, be shared by him with a visiting *gei-khoib*. The *gei-khois* receives her share from the *ǂnoe-di*. The *gei-khoib* may also partake of the meat for the remainder of the men called the *so-||gani*, under which is included the *ǂkoms*. The latter may be eaten only under the *!heis*. After it has been prepared each man brings his wooden bowl or other receptacle and helps himself. Any man whose wife is menstruating will, however, not partake of the *ǂkoms* as it contains blood. The rest of the meat is divided among the men by the *gei-khoib* and is prepared and eaten at their huts.

A similar procedure is adopted in connection with meat killed by the members of an outlying *||gāus*, the *gei-khoib* likewise having to taste it before it may be partaken of. He may either proceed to the *||gāus* concerned, or if the distance to be travelled is considerable, all the meat will be brought to his *||gāus*. In all such cases the *so-eis* is brought to him by the messenger sent to notify him of the kill. When he

8: Fourie D-5 (ca. 1920) 1928
FX10 Bushmen FX10

224 622 visits a *||gũus* for this purpose he kindles the *!hei-/ais* with fire from one of the huts, and, after having tasted the meat, returns to his own.

224 777 Any want of success in the chase is generally attributed to some chance incident. For example, a man, who has had bad luck in hunting while his wife had her periods, will not hunt again when she is in that condition nor will she eat any of the *ǂnoe-di* at such times. The meat of an animal [262] killed by a dog may not be eaten by women or by any men whose wives are menstruating. This prohibition is to prevent bad luck befalling the dog in the pursuit of game. If, however, an animal is killed with bow and arrow after having been brought at bay by a dog, the meat is *so.ra* and women may eat the *ǂnoe-di*. The remains of an animal killed by a lion are not *so.ra* and may be partaken of by all individuals. Care, however, is taken not to offend the lion which likewise observes certain practices after each kill. After having had his fill he buries the sacrum and haunchbones and covers them over with the dung (stomach contents) of the animal. If he should be unsuccessful in hunting his prey he returns to the spot of the last kill, digs up the buried parts and inters them in another place. This he does to restore his luck and if he should find that the bones have been taken away he will follow the person who removed them right into the *||gũus*.

184 224 262 784 *So.ra* applies only to meat killed with bow and arrow and as far as is known at present this practice exists among the *Xom-khoin*, *!Koma-khoin* and *Go-gara-khoin*. Among these groups the meat of the following animals is *so.ra*, namely, steinbuck, duiker, springbuck, hartebeest, gemsbuck, kudu, wildebeest and giraffe. The eland, which is a comparatively rare visitor to the parts occupied by these groups is not killed at all by the *Xom-khoin* who believe that harm will befall any person who eats its meat. In other words the *Xom-khoin* consider the eland to be absolute *so.ra*. Among other groups the man who shoots an eland must, on returning to the *||gũus*, sleep under the *!hei's* as intercourse with his wife will prevent the poison from killing the animal. The same applies to a person who shoots a giraffe.

412 The implements and utensils which are used in the collection and preparation of food are very few in number. Vegetable food is dug up with a sharpened stick, 2 to 5 feet in length.

252 Ö intjes, *||ñoun* and other similar plant foods are roasted in hot ashes covered with cinders. Ants (Bushman rice) are dealt with in a similar manner and then recovered again by means of a sieve of grass matting. Locusts are either roasted or boiled. Frogs, etc., are sometimes roasted over the fire on a wooden spit (branistok) stuck into the ground. Birds, snakes, small antelope, etc., are prepared by placing them in a hollow made in the ashes with a flat paddle-shaped wooden scoop and covering them over with live coals. The meat of larger

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Gikwe

could have found his shallow pit at any time of the day or night.

Nobody was there; everyone had run away. We sat down and waited while Gai put his hands to his mouth and shouted, trying to summon the people back again. When nobody came or even answered him, he flung his pipe to the ground and marched off to find them among the bushes, alternately shouting to his hidden relatives and muttering to himself, for they might be far away and the day was getting warm.

We sat in the middle ground between the depressions so that we wouldn't risk stepping on or crushing anybody's hidden things, for, without knowing it, a European can in a moment trample through a Bushman's cache, breaking the delicate bone or wooden objects, bending the reed arrows, or crushing eggshell beads. Also, among certain groups of Bushmen, every fire has a man's side and a woman's side, determined by the position of the fire as you face the doorway of the scherm, the man's side being on the right, the woman's on the left. If a man sits on the woman's side, or where a woman has been sitting, he will become impotent and will also lose his power to hunt, and if a woman sits where a man has been sitting, she will get a disease in her vagina. Something intangible, invisible, but dangerously powerful, remains on the ground. We did not know which side was which of this werf's fires, or even for sure where the fires were; we did not even know that the Gikwe had this custom, for we had learned it from Kung Bushmen, but we knew that if they did they would not welcome our contaminating their ground. We would have liked to look around, but the best thing we could do was to keep our big boots and our bodies away from their delicate, fragile, almost invisible community.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe

know, but Gai became embarassed and said gravely that Pishiboro put that system there for reproduction and he alone knew how it worked. 124 825

Ukwane then said that he would explain instead, because he was an old man. Gai could not speak of sex in front of women because it was both improper and dangerous and would weaken his power to hunt, but Ukwane was too old for hunting and, besides, was past the age when many of the tabus concerning sex applied to him. Old Bushmen understand everything better anyway, young Bushmen say. 221 831 784 826 888 124

Ukwane knew a great deal. He named every major part, inside and out, of the animal, even naming the major veins and arteries that lead to and from the heart. We were not surprised to find that Bushmen, who prefer to be specific rather than general when dealing with minute things, distinguish more exterior parts of the body then we do. They have names, for example, for the inside of the elbow and the back of the knee. The *leg* of an animal means the hind leg, the front leg is the *arm*, and these are called by the same names as the arm and leg of human beings. Birds, too, fly with their arms and land on their legs, but I never could discover what insects do. 124 825

Ukwane went on to explain the various systems of the body, saying in the case of the urogenital system that liquid, which was "the little springboks," ran from the testicles into the kidneys, then down again and out the penis. He stuck to this version, too, even when Bill suggested that it might be otherwise. This does not mean that Bushmen think that urine causes conception, for they recognize the role of semen, believing that it unites with the menstrual blood of the mother to form a child. [842]

Ukwane understood the course of food and water through the digestive system, but said that food and water spread out 124 827

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

luctance the bride struggled while the other girl caught her. She lifted the bride and carried her on her shoulders, not upright as a figure of triumph but wrapped in the kaross and motionless, like a dead little animal, then put her shrouded body on the floor of the new scherm and left her there to lie quietly while the wedding guests arrived. Again according to custom, the groom seemed to take no notice of his new bride; the people in the werf paid no attention, and, in fact, all the people went about their business in such a matter-of-fact way that an observer would think that nothing had happened although the young people were now married, the wedding had taken place.

The parents of the couple could not attend the wedding, for the young bride and groom were so tabu to them at this time that they could not even mention their names. In fact, no older person could attend, and the guests who came were all children, three-year-olds to teen-agers, who sat by the young couple's fire decorously, the boys on the man's side, the girls on the woman's, and talked quietly for twenty minutes or so, the youngest guests leaving when their bedtimes came. That was all. In the morning the little girl and her young husband were anointed with fat by their mothers, and they lived together from that day on.

A month later the bride's mother, who was herself a young woman, bore another child, her second daughter. We were at her werf at the time, sitting in the shade. That day the young woman had not gone out for veld food, but was lying propped up on her elbow in front of her scherm when suddenly, without telling anyone what was happening, she stood up and walked into the bushes, only to come back some time later with her baby in the fold of her kaross. We might not have known what had happened except that she was smiling a sure, sweet smile because she was pleased with herself. Her

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

and wipes it clean with grass. Then the mother collects the stained grass, the placenta, and the bloody sand and covers them all with stones or branches, marking the spot with a tuft of grass stuck up in a bush so that no man will step on or over the place, for the ground where a child has been born is tainted with a power so strong that any man infected with it would lose an aspect of his masculinity, would lose his power to hunt. The woman does not bury the placenta, for if she did she would lose her ability to bear more children.

The moment of birth is a very important one for the child and for the mother; it is at this moment that the child acquires a power, or an essence, over which he has no control, although he can make use of it. It will last him all his life; it is a supernatural essence that forever after connects the person born with certain forces in the world around him: with weather, with childbearing, with the great game antelope, and with death, and this essence is called the *now*.

There are two kinds of *now*, a rainy or cold one and a hot or dry one. If a person has a wet *now* and burns his hair in a fire or urinates in a fire, the person's *now* is said to make the weather turn cold (if it is the dry season) or bring rain (if it is the rainy season). If a person has a dry *now* and burns hair or urinates in a fire, the *now* is said to stop a cold spell or a bad storm. When a person dies, too, the weather changes violently according to the person's *now*. After a death, scorching droughts or devastating storms are sure to follow.

We knew a Bushman woman at Gautscha whose young son was living not with her but far away with the family of his infant wife, and once, when a rainstorm came so violently that branches were splintered from the trees and water ran in torrents like waterfalls over the rocks beside the pan, the woman began to pine and grieve for her son, who, she felt

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

another Bushman, and because he was so happy to see someone and imagined the two of them passing the night together talking by a fire, he waved and called and ran up to the other Bushman. But when he got there he found that he had been mistaken—what he had thought was a man had been only a stump.

A second song was about two jealous co-wives, and the song, more ironic than sad, was composed by the husband to ridicule them. The names of these two women were Nunkwe and Aite, which sound for all the world like Gikwe names, as perhaps they were, and we wondered how far this song had traveled, by how many ears and mouths, before it found itself at Nama Pan.

The third song was called "*Chiviba*," a song composed by a young man who had brought veld food to his people in a chiviba, a basket made of branches. His people laughed at him and said that he was lazy not to have a bag to carry the veld-food in, but nevertheless they were not too proud to eat what he had brought. The fourth song was called "*Ka Te Te*," the song of the redwing partridge. The redwing partridge is most strongly tabued as food, may never be eaten, and *ka te te* is an imitation of its cry. The song was composed by a man who heard a redwing partridge making a sound in the evening and knew that the sound foretold a misfortune or a death.

Because the young man who owned the guashi was lonely and brooding, it was natural that he should play. The other people loved to hear him and often when he played several people, usually men, would gather to lie in the shade near him or sit beside him with their chins on their raised knees and listen, sometimes singing softly as he sang, very harmoniously, but paying no attention, just singing in their own way within a set harmony, dreaming and soft, and although the young man played for his own ears, not theirs, he could infect

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

164 Short Kwi's wife, who looked around at them all gravely, listening, and when they had finished she nodded her head. "A medicine man of Europeans," they said.

"So," said she.

We talked about the foot for a while, for although he had covered it we could still see the toes. The people of the werf described how Short Kwi was bitten and everyone claimed credit for his part in saving Short Kwi's life. One man had killed the snake, another had cut the fang punctures, and others had given advice at the time and later. The leg had [758] swelled enormously and the medicine men had cut the swollen skin to let blood; the scars of this still showed on the healthy thigh above the blanket. All the people seemed very depressed when talking about it, though; for one reason, they ate meat less often, but also they truly admired him and did not seem to enjoy watching the disaster. Toma asked Short Kwi how he felt and Short Kwi said he thought that his leg had seemed to be getting a little better during the last few days.

582 It was almost evening, and we heard voices singing in the veld. Two women and a young girl were coming home from a trip for veld food. These three were also very happy to see us and the little girl kissed me but not the men, then asked for her mother, who lived at Nama and whom she had not seen for seasons, and we told her that her mother was well. The girl had been newly married and she was as pretty as she could be, with lots of beads, and with long ornaments of tsi nuts hanging beside her face. She wore a fine kaross which [291] she had rubbed with red powder, often a sign to men that a [822] girl is menstruating, as perhaps she was, that men may be [224] careful not to touch her and endanger their powers to hunt. [841] Marriage seemed to have agreed with her. She looked very [784]

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

can afford to be a little luxurious. They rub it on themselves and on their implements and they eat it. ≠Toma said that, when he had eland fat to give, he took shrewd note of certain objects he might like to have and gave their owners especially generous gifts of fat.

Real property and the sources of food and water are owned by the headman for the band and cannot be given away. However, meat, once it is distributed after the hunt, and veldkos, once it is gathered, become private property and may be given. Artifacts are privately owned by the individual man, woman, or child, as outrightly owned if received as a gift as if made by the individual. They borrow and lend a great deal—in itself this is one of the ways they support each other and aid themselves in maintaining social solidarity—but this does not blur the clarity of ownership. Each object acquires some markings of its own from the maker and from usage. It is easy for the /Kung, with their highly developed powers of observation and visual memory, to keep track of the commonest objects, know the ownership, and remember the history of the gifts.

As far as we know, no artifacts or materials are taboo as gifts. For instance, women may be given weapons, although it is taboo for women to touch them.

In quantity the gifts varied. One which /Ti/kay gave to ≠Toma was considered generous. It was a fine ostrich egg shell headband, three ostrich egg shells, and a well-tanned duiker skin as soft as suede. Another generous gift consisted of a knife, a spear, and a triple string of traded white European beads. Often gifts were less. The feelings persons have for each other, the degree of their past indebtedness, what they happen to possess and can give, determine the generosity of the gift.

The acquisition *per se* of the objects was seldom, I believe, of primary importance to most individuals in gift-giving—that is, if the objects were their own artifacts. As the /Kung come into more contact with Europeans—and this is already happening—they will feel sharply the lack of our things and will need and want more. It makes them feel inferior to be without clothes when they stand among strangers who are clothed. But in their own life and with their own artifacts they were comparatively free from material pressures. Except for food and water (important exceptions!) of which the Nyae Nyae /Kung have a sufficiency—but barely so, judging from the fact that all are thin though not emaciated—they all had what they needed or could make what they needed, for every man can and does make the things that men make and every woman the things that women make. No one was dependent upon acquiring objects by gift-giving.

They lived in a kind of material plenty because they adapted the tools of their living to materials which lay in abundance around them and which were free for anyone to take (wood, reeds, bone for weapons and implements, fibres for cordage, grass for shelters), or to materials which were at least sufficient for the needs of the population. The Nyae Nyae /Kung had hides enough for garments and bags; they kept extra hides when they needed them for new garments or when they wanted them for trade; otherwise they ate them. The /Kung could always use more ostrich egg-shells for beads to wear or trade with, but, as it is, enough are found for every woman to have a dozen or more shells for water containers—all she can carry—and a goodly number of bead ornaments.

In their nomadic hunting-gathering life, travelling from one source of food to

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

also commonly used for any man (not a boy) older than the speaker when the speaker must avoid saying the name. The people address the gods as */nau* and *gaoxa* more commonly than as *n/iha*. We were told that they call the great god */nau* ' when he is good '.

It is interesting to know that the power of the great god, his omnipotence which he was so mysteriously able to create for himself, is called *gaoxa* and that the special potent ' spiritual ' medicine which the great god puts into the medicine men, the curing power, is also called *gaoxa*.

The /Kung often call the great god ' father ' especially in supplication, and plead that he succour his ' children ' and give them rain or good fortune in the hunt or whatever they may be asking for.

Nonabe is a term of great disrespect, a ' scolding ' term. When used for a human being it is a curse and a terrific insult. A man who felt himself greatly wronged by another and in violent anger would say of the man who wronged him, ' That *Nonabe*! ' But he would not say this to the man's face ' for if he did there might be a fight (so great is the insult). When he saw the man in person he would come in peace to him, not showing his anger '. *Nonabe* is used in blasphemy by the medicine men in trance, along with other insults when they are combating the gods and the *//gamwasi* in the medicine dances, demanding that they take away the evil they have brought.

The Fear of the Names

The Nyae Nyae /Kung ' fear ' (*koa*) to utter the names of the gods. The word 'means both' to be afraid of, as one is afraid of a mamba, and 'to respect and avoid', as one respects one's mother-in-law and avoids speaking to her and saying her name.

Children must strictly avoid saying any of the names of the gods. Old men and women need not observe an absolutely restrictive taboo in uttering the names, and may and do say them, but there seems to be an element of taboo (it is a ' death-thing ', they say) and fear of drawing attention to themselves. We were aware of their unwillingness to speak of religious matters early in our work and therefore waited until our relations were well established before questioning them. Our information was gathered for the most part in 1953 and 1955 at many different sessions with fifteen men and eight women informants who had proved to be reliable. Others joined the talks casually and when they wished to do so. Our informants declared themselves willing to teach me because I wished to know. Throughout the discussions people varied in the degree of caution and discretion with which they spoke the names. Sometimes we talked literally in whispers and usually at least in low voices, saying ' the one in the east ', ' the one in the west '. On one occasion /Ti/kay told me that my questions made him sick. He meant to claim, I ascertained, that he had an actual physical sensation such as a nervous twinge or slight nausea. The woman who first told me the name of the wife of the great god put her lips to my ear and whispered, barely audibly, ' *Huwadi* '. Next day, unfortunately, she had a high fever. She recovered, but the episode put an end to my trying to learn from her about the wives of the gods. /U, when someone was ill at Cho/ana, and she was filled with anxiety and longing to be home at Gautscha, made me promise not to say the names or ask any more questions, at least until we were all safely back.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

681 There are, further, various sanctions by which non-fulfilment or the breach of any recognized custom is penalized, and which thus also serve as another and more direct means of securing conformance with the pattern of social life. In this category we may place ritual sanctions, where any departure from a prescribed rule of conduct is followed automatically by evil results, without any direct interference on the part of the community. The breaking of a taboo, for instance, is [784] held to produce serious consequences, such as death or disease or ill-luck in the chase. Thus among the Cape Bushmen, as we have seen, girls who do not observe the restrictions imposed upon them at the time of puberty are believed to change into frogs, while men who are seen by the girls at this time become permanently fixed in whatever position they then occupy, and so on. And again there are the [224] numerous observances and avoidances associated with hunting, which if neglected will result in ill-success, the loss of a wounded animal, etc. All sanctions of this sort—and in the preceding pages we have had occasion to notice a good many of them—may be regarded as legal mechanisms, in the sense that they operate to maintain the observance of accepted usages and customs.

627 Other breaches of custom, however, involve the direct intervention of the members of the community. In general, when disputes arise [578] between the members of the band—among the Naron they are said [692] to be infrequent—there is no appeal to any supreme authority, for, as we have just noted, there is no such authority, nor are cases of wrongdoing or quarrels referred to the chiefs where these exist. The only remedy is self-help. But in so far as self-help is the recognized mode of reaction, it must also be regarded as a legal institution. Blood vengeance indeed is the principal, if not the only, recognized way of dealing with serious offences committed against a person even by members of the same band.[1]

The principal actions penalized in this way are adultery, theft, and [684] homicide. In the case of adultery, as we have already seen, the injured husband attempts to kill the adulterer, if he possibly can, while the unfaithful wife is beaten and in some cases divorced. Theft also [685] provokes blood vengeance, when the thief refuses to restore the stolen property.[2] Even if he does, he is reproached for his deed, and

[1] Kaufmann, op. cit., 155; Trenk, op. cit., 169; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 35–6.

[2] According to one of the texts published by Bleek and Lloyd (*Bushman Folklore*, 416–25), among the Kung a man who steals in the camp is killed by the others present, who all shoot at him with their arrows. A married woman who steals is also sometimes shot by her own husband. More frequently, however, she is burned alive in a hut; although, if her parents are